

11: Oylar M-5 (ca. 1918)1919

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THE SHILLUK'S BELIEF IN THE EVIL EYE.

THE EVIL MEDICINE MAN .

BY REV. D. S. OYLER.

I. — THE SHILLUK'S BELIEF IN THE EVIL EYE.

To the animistic mind of the Shilluk, the occult powers are always near, and the fact that they can not be seen makes them none the less real. Around, about him everywhere are the spirits, and daily he comes in contact with people, who are the possessors of occult powers. They recognize five classes of people, who are in possession of hidden powers. They are:

The servants of the king, that is the people in whom is the spirit of one of the kings;

The beneficent medicine men or witch-doctors;

The malignant medicine men or witch-doctors;

The people with the power of the evil eye, and

The people possessed of the evil spirit.

Some say that the class of people with the power to cast the evil eye receive their power from the evil medicine men, and would class them together, but very few make that classification. However, in talking about the evil eye, it always brings up the subject of the malignant medicine men. The powers claimed for the two classes are very similar.

Many say, with good reason, that the people possessed of the evil spirit should not be so called, but that their affliction is merely a disease. We would call it insanity.

These articles do not exhaust the subjects, but a little has been gleaned from the contradictory tales of the Shilluks. Often the ideas of the natives

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are hazy as to the powers which animate the different classes, but they have no doubt as to the power of the people who make the claims. 754

The Shilluks believe firmly in the power of the evil eye. A few claim that the people who cast the evil eye belong to the evil medicine men, and receive their power from them, but the people are almost unanimous in saying that they have their power separately, and they think that it comes from God. The fact that the power is inherited tends to prove that they are really a separate class.

When one person in a family has the evil eye, the house is spoken of as the house or family with the evil eye, though all the members of the family may not have that power. A man may have this power, and his wife be all right, or it may be the wife that is affected, but in every case all their children are affected, though the unaffected husband may have untainted children by another wife. This taint is carried by their descendants, and theoretically at least is supposed to extend to the end of time.

A girl who has the power of the evil eye is not sought in marriage, and while the man afflicted in this manner is not desirable as a husband, yet he does not have so much trouble in getting a wife. This is not because they differentiate between the sexes, but because a man pays a heavy dowry for his wife, and he does not want to buy a tainted wife, whose children will also bear the taint of a hidden power. If the afflicted man has the price, the father is very often willing to accept him for a son-in-law, and that is especially true, when the daughter is not very desirable. As a class the people with the evil eye try to keep their neighbours ignorant of their powers. 582 754 [583]

In addition to those who inherit the evil eye, others suddenly receive the power. It suddenly falls upon them, or comes on them. They know not how it comes, but suddenly they find themselves with that dread power. 754

A person possessed of the evil eye can not always be distinguished. The fact that a certain person has that power is known in his own village, and the stranger coming in soon enquires about it, and is told. However one mark can be relied on to some extent, and that is if a person has eyes in which the whites are small, and the iris is large in proportion, and the iris is very dark. This test is not sure as some people of the class do not have this mark, and others, who do not have the power have the mark. 754 826

754 The possessed is conscious of the fact that he has the power and may even mention the fact. The power is made operative by looking fixedly at the person to be made the victim. The person exercising the power is usually in anger when the deed is done. The person who is bewitched says the eye went into me, and if the person who did the deed speaks of it, he will usually say that his eye went into the person.

[753] The evil eye does not always take effect in the same part of the body. If the curse falls on the eye, the person will have sore eyes terminating in blindness. They recognize three causes of blindness, other than accidents. Blindness may follow the small pox, or measles, or else it is the result of the evil eye. When the evil eye strikes the ear, deafness is the result, and when it is on the head, sores and swellings appear on the head. When the body is affected, it is covered with sores. The intestines or the liver may be the part afflicted, and they swell to unnatural size, and the worst part about it is that the swelling is permanent. One young man, who was a very fine looking child, was afflicted thus, and ever since he has been out of proportion. The doctors called it enlargement of the spleen. A man who is a very swift runner may have the evil eye take effect in his feet, and in that case the feet swell, and the victim has trouble in walking. The curse may fall on the teeth, and they decay. The evil eye may strike the unborn babe, and it disappears. The most dangerous place to have the evil eye take effect is in the heart, and in case it does the victim can not live through the day.

[752] The evil eye is not confined to the body, but it may also affect the domestic animals belonging to a person. When a person drinks the milk of a cow that has been touched by the evil eye, it causes his insides to swell. A very fine appearing cow is not permitted to go into the village by herself but is kept with the herd, and she is to be kept in the middle of the herd so that she may not be seen, and the curse come on her. A very fine calf is always kept hidden. Sheep may become the victims of the evil eye.

The power extends beyond animate things to the inanimate. A blacksmith may make a very fine bracelet, and it breaks as he is putting it on the wrist of the owner. The bracelet was bewitched by the evil eye. When a very fine spear breaks when it is being polished just after it is made, it is because of the evil eye.

As can be seen from some of the effects of the evil eye, the Shilluk's idea of sickness has much to do with the increasing of their belief in the evil eye. They do not think of a disease as being contagious so much, as they think of it being spread by some hostile agency. Some people carry their views to such lengths, that they are inclined to think that every accident, and every case of sickness is caused by some occult agency. The power may be exercised by some other agent than the person with the evil eye.

When a person is taken sick, all the symptoms are very thoroughly discussed by the people of the village, and if some mysterious features or circumstances are brought to light, it is immediately looked upon as a visitation from some occult power. Most cases of sickness present some puzzling features, and so it is easy to give credit to the evil eye for much of it. Most accidents occur not because someone was careless, but because some hidden power was invoked against the person. The patient is then taken to the good medicine man. He goes through certain forms to determine the source of the evil charm. He may decide it is from the evil eye, or from an evil medicine man.

When a medicine man undertakes to cure a case of the evil eye, he aims to do two things. The first is to cure the person suffering, and the second is to put that particular charmer with the evil eye out of business. A sheep is brought, and the medicine man heats a nail red-hot. With the nail he blinds the sheep. He then tells the patient that he is cured, and at the same time the burning out the eyes of the sheep is a type of what will happen to the person who cast the spell. His eyes will waste away. If the eyes of the person who cast the spell do not become inflamed, the cure does not take effect. When the person who casts the charm hears of the cure performed by the medicine man, he hastens to him at night, and beseeches him to spare his eyes. The medicine man exacts a good fee from him, and then assures him that he will save his eyes, but warns him not to do it again, and threatens to kill him if he sees him casting the evil eye on another person.

A person with the evil eye can cure a person who is suffering from the evil eye. Of course he gets a good fee for it. Before he takes the case he gets a small fee, such as a sheep or a hoe, and after the case is cured he

754 demands a large fee, usually a cow. The patient sits down near the person
755 who is to treat him. The latter says: "You have come near me, therefore you will not die". He then grinds up a bit of wood, and putting it in water, makes the patient drink it.

754 The spell of the evil eye may be cast in the presence of people, and all present even to the victim may be ignorant of what is being done, though it may be known. The man with the evil eye may be seen staring at the victim. For that reason the Shilluks do not like to have a person look them in the eye. When a person stares at a Shilluk, he usually averts his eyes, or protests.

683 When the evil eye has been cast on a person, he very seldom tries to
754 discover the identity of the person who bewitched him. Should the person boast of having done it, he will be fined as though he had killed a man. The victim may have seen the person staring at him, and directly accuse him of the act, but that is not always safe, as the case is brought before a medicine man. If the person accused of casting the evil eye shows fear he is guilty, and must pay a fine equal to that paid for killing a man. If he shows no fear, it was a false accusation, and in that case the accuser must pay an equal fine for his false charge.

578 The motive for using the evil eye is usually envy or jealousy or anger,
754 for the evil eye always picks a shining mark, it does not fall on poor people, nor is a poor thing bewitched. A poor man may occasionally be the victim of the evil eye, but it is always an accident, as he has eaten food that has been bewitched to catch a richer person. They take some precautions to avoid the evil eye.

751 If a person has some very choice food, it is covered so that the evil eye
754 may not fall on it. Food is very often bewitched, but it is usually meat or fish that is tainted, and it is very seldom that food made from grain is affected. Food that has had the evil eye cast on it can be made fit to eat by giving some of it to a dog. They say that the dog takes off the eye. The milk of a cow that has been affected can be cleansed by taking some of it in a vessel, and pouring it on a fire. The fire is put out, and from that time the milk of that cow is safe to use. If these precautions are not taken, the food will cause nausea. After the nausea has passed, evil consequences may remain, or a person may be all right.

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The natives weave their hair into fantastic shapes. If a person has very fine hair, he puts a few thorns in it to keep off the evil eye. Should the evil eye fall on his hair, his head would break out in sores.

When a person has his body well oiled or covered with some fine ashes, he is very likely to have the evil eye cast on him. To escape that misfortune he takes a cucumber like pod from a wild plant, and takes out the seeds. Some of the seeds are put on the temples, and some on the neck, and others on the tip of the shoulder blade, or the entire fruit may be worn suspended from the neck.

When butter is boiled to clarify it, the work is usually done at night so that the evil eye may not be cast on it.

The Shilluks will not say that they are in good circumstances, lest it be heard by some envious person, and he should cast the evil eye on their possessions. When a rich man is asked in regard to his property, he usually says I have one or two cows, but they are very poor cows.

The parents of a very fine looking child do not like to let people see it for fear someone will cast the evil eye on it, and the parent is very angry when someone comments on the good appearance of the child. Should the child be taken sick, the parents call on the person who made the remark, and demand that he pay the fine required when a person is killed. The accused usually holds out, and a compromise is effected. He brings a sheep, and one of its ears is cut off. The sheep then is a witness against the man, and by doing that, he assumes the responsibility for the child. If it dies, he pays the fine as though he had killed it. Even if the child reaches maturity and dies, the man is responsible and must pay the fine.

Frequently people have hard knots in their flesh. These are really stones that have been put there by someone with the evil eye. The swellings do not disappear.

The Shilluks have a custom that when a person is threshing his grain, they go to beg from him. Sometimes they go in such numbers that the man has very little left for himself, but he does not dare to refuse for fear someone in the party may cast the evil eye on him. He gets even by going to beg from some other person.

They give a few warnings as to conduct when with a person who has the evil eye.

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626 If you walk with a person who has the evil eye, let him walk in front,
751 for if you go in front you give him a good chance to cast the evil eye on you.

754 When a person with the evil eye begs from you, grant his request, because when he accepts your present his power over you is broken, and he can not injure you. He may regain his power if he comes again and is refused, for if you refuse him, he becomes angry and casts the evil eye on you.

When eating, let the oldest of the party take the food first, so that if the evil eye has fallen on the food he may detect it, and the food can be cleansed.

When eating with a man who has the evil eye, do not eat much or he will kill you.

When you are angry at a certain village, do not enter that village or you will get the evil eye.

Do not speak harshly to a man who has the evil eye, or he will cast the spell on you.

754 Once a man gave his daughter to the king to be his wife. The girl had the evil eye, and when the king learned that fact, he gave the woman to another man lest she kill his other wives.

At the present time a chief is suffering from the evil eye. The people of another village had stolen his cow. He went to the village in anger, and talked harshly. While there he felt a chill run through his body. He went home, and took sick. His body has sores on it that have come from the evil eye.

The man with the power to cast the evil eye is feared by the people, but he is not feared as much as the evil medicine man. When he causes death, it is usually sudden, though it may be lingering. When a person [761] with the evil eye dies, the people of the village rejoice, though they do not show their joy openly.

The possessors of the evil eye are deceived even as the people who fear them. They go through life apart from their fellow men in many respects. They believe in their own evil powers, and while their claims sound childish to us, yet we must consider the fact that the history of the English speaking world reveals the fact that our ancestors were afraid of witches, even after they had reached a much greater development than the Shilluk has attained.

II. — THE EVIL MEDICINE MAN.

The Shilluks believe that occult power of a malignant nature is possessed by a certain class of men. The man with this power is called *jal yat* (the first *a* as in lad, the second, as *a* in father and the *t* is a dental). It means the man of the tree, or medicine, as *yat* means either a tree, or the injuring or healing powers of certain compounds, which are usually derived from trees. 754
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The men of this class are all born with the distinguishing mark. Three different marks divide them into three divisions. The first have but one testicle showing in the scrotum; the second have two, but they are very small, and the third have none. The first class is the more numerous, and are the dominating class. The members of the first and second class are supposed to be equal in the manifestation of their powers, but the third are more powerful. 754
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Children born marked as evil medicine men are thrown into the river at birth, which is called sending them to their own country. The father alone has the power to spare his son in such a case. 845
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The young wife always returns to her own home to give birth to her first child. After that she may either remain in the home of her husband, or go to her old home, but in either case a few hours after the child is born a number of men come to the door of the house and sit down. If the husband is in the village, he is one of the number. If it is in the woman's home, her relatives go through this formality. The men say: "What is it?". If the women within reply "a boy", the men then ask: "Is it good?". If the women reply immediately "it is good", the men go away happy, but if the women hesitate or answer: "It is bad", the men go in to investigate. If they find that the child is an evil medicine man, they immediately begin to go through certain forms. When the child is born in the wife's old home, a messenger must be sent off to the father. Should the messenger merely say that a son has been born, and not tell of his deformity the husband can recover part of the cattle he has paid for his wife, and his relatives-in-law become responsible for any damage the child may do. When the father is told that the child is bad, he usually says it must be killed. He [844]
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672 fears to trust his relatives-in-law lest they yield to the pleadings of the
845 mother, and so he sends a messenger to see that the child is killed. Should
847 the father permit the child to live, he is responsible for all the evil done by
him. If the father is present, he gives immediate judgment, and if it is for
death, the sentence is carried out immediately.

845 The helpless child is always killed in a certain way. A little basket is
847 woven, and the child placed within, and then the top is also woven shut.
The basket is then put in a boat, and taken to the middle of the river,
where it is committed to the water. The basket is a necessity, as they think
that the powers of the babe are such that without the basket to restrain
him he would immediately swim ashore, and escape:

842 When the evil medicine man is not killed, his mother loses the power to
845 become a mother again, and when she weeps for the death of the little one,
her next child will be deformed in the same way.

682 If the father spares the child, and someone else kills it, the murderer
must suffer the usual punishment for murder, which can usually be atoned
for by a fine.

754 After an evil medicine man has reached maturity, he can not be openly
627 killed except under certain conditions. The people of his village may tire
683 of his evil practices and conspire to kill him accidentally. To accomplish
that end they invite him to join them in the chase, and they manage to get
him well to the front. When he is in the right position, they all throw at
the animal, but he is their real target. When he falls, the men all cry out :
"an accident", and no one is responsible for his death. They do not seek
to kill such a person in their local fights lest their own side be thrown into
disorder.

754 This occult power is not hereditary, but many think that the mother of
an evil medicine man has some occult power, if her husband is not of that
class. She does not work as the men do, and the majority seem to think
that such a mother is not tainted.

The evil medicine man always works on his own initiative, and never at
the request of another, and for that reason he never receives fees. He uses
as his tools, owls, snakes, eggs, sodom apples, lizards, and crows. The
medicine or power in these agents is the same as the power belonging to
the man, and in action unite with his power to work evil.

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As a class they are without mercy, and do not intercede for the children, who are killed. However, if an evil medicine man has a son afflicted in a like manner, he spares his life. They try to keep people ignorant of the fact that they have the evil power, and when someone mentions the work of the evil medicine man in the presence of one of the class, he usually says "why are they so evil?".

They belong to the dark as they always work at night, and when one is seen casting his charm on the house of another, if he tries to run away he may be killed, and no punishment is inflicted on the murderer; but if he is caught, and held, and then killed, the murderer is fined. If he is caught, he must pay a fine as though he had killed a man. It is very difficult to hold them, as they blind their captors temporarily by throwing some medicine in their eyes.

The statement is made that they usually try to cast their charms on houses where people are sick, and that accounts for some of their apparently wonderful achievements. This statement is also borne out by one case at the mission. The calves had been dying from some disease. One night an evil medicine man came, and made a great hole in the mud wall of the barn. Some object, perhaps a snake, had been dragged among the calves, and sticks were placed in a certain manner in front of the opening. The herder was in great distress, as he was sure all of the calves would die, but not another one died from that disease.

The people firmly believe in this black art, and apparently in many cases at least the victims believe themselves possessed of this power. They go out into a desert place at night, and pray thus: "You, who are God give me this person to kill. Why was I created thus if it was not that I was to kill?" If he does not succeed at the first attempt, he tries till he is successful. Their belief in their own powers is also shown by the fact that the little boys of this class work charms on their little play fellows, apparently practising their powers. Perhaps the child has heard much of his own evil powers, and he desires to learn whether or not he can do the wonderful things attributed to him, and as he tries he becomes convinced of his own power.

To call a man a *jal yat* is a serious matter even though it is a well known fact that he has the power. The person making the statement must

683 pay a fine unless he has caught the man actually working a charm. The
754 accused says : « Whom have I injured in your house? ». He does not try to
plead that he is innocent of such work, but only that he has not injured
his accuser.

754 The malignant medicine man has many means of bringing disaster to
people. If he is able to get a bit of hair, the parings of the nails, spittle
or any thing else that has been part of the body, or the clothing of the
body, he can work a charm on it, so that the owner will die. If he is igno-
rant of the identity of the owner, he can do nothing with these things. For
(302) that reason, when a man cuts his hair or his nails, he either hides the
part removed or else puts it on a public road, so that the identity of the
owner can not be learned.

A case that illustrated their belief in that power occurred here once. One
afternoon a man came in great wrath with his daughter. He said someone
on the place had killed his daughter that morning. As she seemed to be in
good health, his statement seemed to be a little ridiculous. When asked to
explain, he said that she had been carrying water, and that she had laid off
her outer garment which was of calf skin. When she returned to get her
garment, she found that someone had cut a piece out of it. We was sure a
man with the occult power to kill had done the deed. When examined the
edge of the marred place was seen to be rough. Others, who had been
working were called to see if the identity of the person doing the wrong
could be ascertained. At last a boy said that he had seen two pups playing
with the skin and dragging it about. He had driven them away, and re-
turned it to its place. The man was satisfied that harm had not been in-
tended against his daughter, and she returned to work.

Over a bit of mud taken from the wall of a house, or a bit of grass from
the roof, a charm can be worked that will kill the owner of the house.

When a man's club falls into the hands of one of these evil men, he
buries it, which is symbolical of the burial of the owner which will soon
occur, or he may kill the man by cutting the club in two, or a hoe may be
given to him by the children while the older people are away. He throws
the hoe into the river, and the arm of the owner is destroyed so that he can
not hoe. He may also steal a cow rope or a spear and work a charm on it
that will kill the owner.

Many things are done by the evil medicine men. He cuts off a cow's tail, and it becomes barren; but if he treats a bull in the same way, it brings disaster on the house of the owner. Any mishap that may come to him is sure to be caused by the fact that his bull was maimed. 754

He may not be able to get a person in any other way, and finally kills his dog. That causes the death of the master. He slips into a house, and cuts off a bit of the skin on which the people sleep. The people who sleep in that house all die. He watches a person as he walks and counts his steps. The person dies. He defiles food, and those eating it die that very day. If the food is given to a dog it coughs, and swells, but it does not die. He cuts a bit out of the loin cloth of a woman, and she becomes sterile.

For one special device of the evil medicine men the good medicine men have a special counter. The evil man makes a mud image of the man he expects to kill. He sticks nails in the ears of the effigy, and puts it in the fire. The man will either die or go crazy. The good medicine man makes another image of the man when he comes for help, and it is put in water, and that tends to neutralize the heat on the other image. [755]

They have the power to bewitch a herd of cattle so that all the milk is found in the udders of their own cows, or they can injure the grain in the fields. One of the evil medicine men sees the field of a certain man yielding very abundantly, and he becomes envious. He waits till the next crop has been planted, and is just coming up. He then goes to the field at night and pulls up a bit of the grain, and then throws a dead snake in the field. From that time on the field will not bear, and the owner takes a new field and leaves the old one. He may hear that a certain person is a very fast hoer. He goes at night and takes a bit of the soil from his field, and in so doing achieves a double victory. The owner of the field loses his power to hoe, and the field loses its fertility. 754
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These men with the occult power are said to be envious of the man with a large family, and for that reason they cast many spells on little children, and they must be guarded so as not to come into the presence of such an evil man. When he spits on a child, it dies. The reason for this envy is that the man can not have a large family. He may have many children, but as a judgment for the blood on his hands most of them die in infancy. 754
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754 The evil medicine man takes advantage of the carelessness of the people. A man may be gathering the old stalks on his field to burn them, but fails to burn them that evening. An evil medicine man comes at night and burns them, and then the owner gets the ashes on his hands, and his hands swell. Or the large stick used in planting the grain may be left in the field at night, and the owner of the malignant power enters the field, and burns it. The grain will grow well till it gets to be almost ready to yield the harvest, when it is burned by the sun so that it dies. Water that is left in the garden over night may be defiled, and the people who drink it die.

The evil charmer is envious of the successful fisherman. He gets a bone of a fish that the man has caught. The fish bone is burned in the fire. That works a charm on the fish spear, so that in the future it will not be able to take the fish.

Accidents which terminate in blindness are caused by the evil medicine men.

53 In the hot season, when the people sleep in their yards, the evil medicine man comes at night and sprinkles blood on the sleepers, and they die.

751 After a person has been buried, the grave is watched for three or four
764 nights lest the man of evil should take a bit of the earth, and by working a charm on it kill the whole family of the deceased; but after a short time he can not work that charm, so at the end of the fourth day the watchmen are dismissed.

751 When with an evil medicine man it is well to be on the alert. When a
754 person is sitting with a man of that class, when he gets up he should brush the ground where he has been sitting so as not to leave an imprint of his body for the man to use in his witchcraft. When a person sees such a man walking behind him, he should return, and if the man is stepping exactly in his tracks, he should be taken and made to ransom the man as he was killing him. It is not safe to sleep in the same house with them, as they may defile a person in his sleep. In eating with them it is best to stop before a person is satisfied. To strike an evil medicine man is to invite certain death. The people have the habit of asking a person to wash their
515 backs when they are bathing. Should a person ask an evil medicine man to do that favour for him he will be very itchy all that night, and later have sores all over his back.

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All the evil medicine men keep snakes, but usually they have them in a gourd or den in the fields, though a few of the most powerful have kept the snakes in their houses. To deceive the people, they pretend to fear snakes. 231 754

A man, who is reliable, tells this story of a transaction he witnessed. He was making a short trip. He came to a village where the people were very much excited. He found that the cause of the trouble was that a sick man said he had been bewitched by an evil medicine man named Akomadul. Poor Akomadul was brought into the centre of the village, and beaten by all of the people, until at last he cried out: "Do not kill me, I did it, but I will save him. I will remove the charm I have put on him." Akomadul then went into the house of the sick man, and took out a bit of hollow ambach wood that had been hidden in the grass of the roof. Inside of it were, a charm, an egg, and a lizard. The people were not satisfied, and they began to beat him again. He then went to the field of the afflicted man, and got a charm that had been buried there. It was a large stick with an iron ring at each end, and stretched between the rings was a lizard. He next went to the doorway of the patient, and took up a cooking vessel that had been buried there. The vessel was full of charms, eggs, and lizards. The chief of the village asked him why he wanted to kill the man, and he said: "He cursed me because I killed one of his relatives." Akomadul then took a white sheep, and said: "I will save the man." The sheep was cut open while yet alive, and the contents of the stomach were put on the patient, and on his house. The blood was put in the hole where the cooking vessel had been buried. He then said: "The man will get well; even though you kill me, he will recover." The people wanted to kill the witch, but the chief intervened to save his life. It was reported that the man recovered after a long illness. 754 683

It can easily be seen that many ills can readily be diagnosed as coming from an evil medicine man. When the good medicine man has found that the malady was caused by an evil medicine man, he proceeds to break the charm. Different methods are used, but one or two will suffice. While the medicine man is working, the parents of the patient pray for him, if they are living. In case they are dead, his male relatives pray for him. The patient sits on the ground while the healer jumps over him in such a way as 755

755 to encircle him with his legs. The medicine man then spits on his hands, and strikes the patient lightly. He then places his hands in the arm pits of the afflicted person, and proceeds to knead his whole body, and then concludes by stretching the patient's fingers. A chicken is then killed, put in a cooking vessel, and buried. A burning torch is then passed in circles about the head of the patient. Three highlig pegs are then driven in the ground near his door, and the medicine man taking water in his hands blesses it, and sprinkles it on the ground by the pegs, and as he sprinkles [782] it he prays: «Help my breast that the man may live. I have worked; the matter rests with you, you are God, it was you, who created, and the tree (medicine).»

Others add to the above by grinding up a bit of a certain plant, and giving it to the patient in water. Then grass is tied in little knots, and scattered on the road, and the patient is then put in a house, and a spear stuck up near his head to guard him.

754 The evil medicine men kill their own relatives first so as to inherit their
602 property.

754 Sometimes when the evil medicine man is old, he reforms and leaves
all his old practices, and hires his powers to help people. When they try
756 to help, they are very powerful. A story was told by different people, but none of them were eye witnesses of the cure, though they had it from a man who was present.

To begin the cure, two oxen were paid. The patient was tied so he could not move, and laid on the ground. The medicine man then called his two big snakes, and when they came to him, he said: «You see the man, and the fee. Shall we help him? If you assent, go to him.» The snakes went to the poor victim, and much to his terror crawled all over him, and they even went so far as to lick his face. The patient called loudly for help, and even wept. The medicine man called for water, and sprinkled it on the patient, after he had blessed it, and he announced that the patient was cured.

754 Another reformed malignant medicine man, had such power over a cer-
tain bit of water that if a person fished in it without permission, some
791 mishap would over take him. The required permission would be given when the fisherman promised to give as a fee the first fish taken, and

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another had such power over the animals in a certain district that it was not safe to hunt without his blessing, which was given by spitting on the hunter and his dogs. If that blessing was not obtained, the hunter would be devoured by lions. 754 791

Sometimes an evil medicine man may have the power of the evil eye as well, and then he is exceedingly strong. While most of the natives say that the people with the evil eye, and the evil medicine men are entirely separate some connection must exist, for if a man begins to talk about one he invariably brings in some thing about the other, and it is not always easy to know which he is talking about. One of the chief differences in the method of working is that with one, merely to look on the victim is enough, but the other must get some means of contact. 754

As a class they accept the reputation given them, and try to live up to it. They are sinned against, and they seek to repay in kind. Shunned as evil they come to believe in the powers ascribed to them. Many of the miracles accomplished by their power follow so long after the invocation of the power, that a less superstitious race would not look upon it as a result of their power.

Through superstition the evil medicine man is a power among the Shilluks. Thoughts of his power may cast a gloom over the most festive occasion, and at night when the world is peopled by the spirits of their fancies, the evil medicine man prowls about. The hooting of an owl or unusual tapping sounds caused by the wind bring a thrill of dread to the heart of the Shilluk, which can not be dispelled by the bright light of day.

D. S. OYLER.